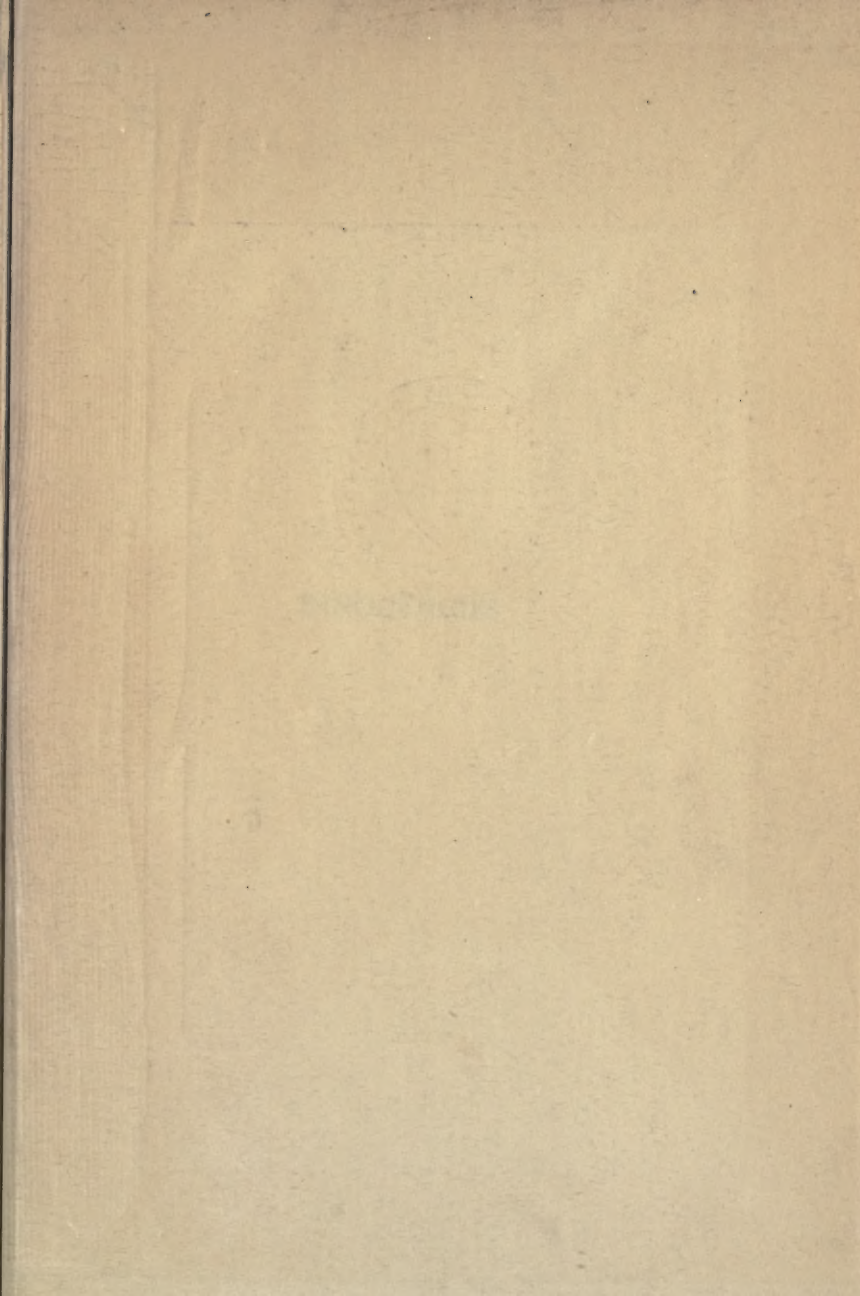




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INNOCENCIES



~~1386~~

INNOCENCIES: A BOOK OF VERSE
BY KATHARINE TYNAN.



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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
GEORGE WYNDHAM, M.P.

*"And I shall thereupon
Take rest ere I be gone
Once more on my adventure, brave and new :
Fearless, and unperplexed
When I wage battle next,
What weapons to select, what armour to indue."*

*I sing of children and of folk on wings,
Of faith, of love, of quiet country things ;
Of death that is but lying down at night
And waking with the birds at morning light ;
And of the Love of God encompassing ;
And of the seasons round from Spring to Spring ;
I sing of gardens, fields, and flowers and trees :
Therefore I call my love-songs Innocencies.*

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THE DEAD CHILD.

The little son was dead
Ere he was born, alas !
Never upon his hapless head
The saving water was.

In Crios-na-Lanna drear
They laid the precious clay
That will not rise in any year
Nor on the Judgment Day.

As she went to and fro,
Her tears fell down like rain
For the small son she might not know,
Whom she had borne in pain.

As she went out about,
Her tears they burned like fire
For the small wandering soul cast out
That was Our Lord's desire.

As she went to the well,
Past Crios-na-Lanna dark,
She heard the sheep and the sheep-bell
And many a happy lark.

O'er churchyard grave and moss
The sheep cropped, well content;
The little grave without a cross
Cried to her as she went.

She never raised her eyes,
But drew the water clear.
Is that a new-born babe that cries,
Or straying lambkin near?

O is it lamb or child
That leaves the churchyard sod?
A little lamb all undefiled
And like the Lamb of God;

That seeks its mother mild
With tender soft alarms;
O is it lamb or is it child
That bleats within her arms?

O is it child or lamb
That pushes at her breast?
A lamb that sought its straying dam
And has come home to rest.

On Crios-na-Lanna's rock
The sheep browse safe from harms:
One little lamb has left the flock
And leaped into her arms.

By Crios-na-Lanna lone
At morning-tide and even,
The hungry heart has found its own,
The mother is in heaven.

WITHOUT YOU.

Without you, dear, I am not comfortable ;
I am alone, whether I wake or sleep ;
The soul in me chilly, afraid, unstable,
Without your comfortable companionship.
Heart cries to heart, beloved, deep calls to deep ;
To say these things aright I am not able.
I wake afar from you and wake to weep,
Being without you lost, uncomfortable.

I am grown used to you and customary
Your thousand benefits : as the good sun
That warms me through and through, and is not weary,
As the sweet winds that fan me every one.
Without them I should lie as cold as a stone ;
Angels of God, free givers and uncharry,
In my still heart their praises are not done,
Nor are your gifts grown staled and customary.

Without you I am like a child that, straying,
Knows its own weakness and timidities;
My soul without your soul's support and staying
Cries to you, shipwrecked on unhappy seas.
I walk with strangers and have little ease,
My thoughts wander far from the lights and playing;
My heart flies home to where her one friend is.
Without you I am like a child that's straying.

GREENSLEEVES.

The little spirit of the place
Glides, spirit-like, over the grass;
She is five years old, five years, alas!
Beauty runs in the hour-glass.

She has a kirtle, straight and sweet,
Of the spring's green as it is meet,
And delicate, bare, dew-dabbled feet;
Her hair of the squirrel red is it.

Her eyes are of the squirrel red,
Freckles, like golden drops, are shed
On the milk skin ; her face is made
A little moon in her hair's shade.

Her orchard goes in flower and fruit ;
At night the nightingale comes to it,
The thrush and blackbird call their suit
Ere ever the nightingale is mute.

Adown the pale green avenues
Spring scatters her whites and blues.
The little feet amid the dews
Have a queen's carpet for their use.

The place is holy and the hour,
And only gentle things have power ;
The honeysuckle falls in a shower,
The wind ruffles the wind-flower.

The little spirit, still and wise,
Steals through the evening mysteries,
Shadow and silence in her eyes.
The night has frankincense and spice.

INTROIT.

'Twere bliss to see one lark
Soar to the azure dark
Singing upon his high celestial road.
I have seen many hundreds soar, thank God !

To see one spring begin
In her first heavenly green,
Were grace unmeet for any mortal clod.
I have seen many springs begin, thank God !

After the lark the swallow,
Blackbirds in hill and hollow,
Thrushes and nightingales all roads I trod,
As though one bird were not enough, thank God !

Not one flower, but a rout,
All exquisite, are out :
All white and golden every stretch of sod,
As though one flower were not enough, thank God !

WINTER TREES.

Across the sky, across the snow,
The sober rooks are winging slow,
Gray roses in the rush-fringed pool,
And Winter trees are beautiful.

The West is now a garden-close,
Pink roses and a golden rose,
With amber and with tender green,
To let the throbbing stars between.

Against that world of roses stand—
These are the woods of Fairyland—
Poplar and oak and elm to make
A gold brake and a rosy brake.

Instead of silky leaves of Spring
The stars now make their garnishing,
For May roses and April white;
The snow has lit them all the night.

The red sun hangs his lantern red
Between the black boughs overhead,
The evening clothes them with his mist
Half sapphire and half amethyst.

The dawn roses are scattered here
As 'twere a rose espalier
Whose happy boughs have borne for fruit
Red roses all from head to foot.

Even the lamp that men have set
To light the way for travelling feet
Caught in the dark tree glitters bright
As chrysophrase and chrysolite.

Down the long road's perspective go
The dark trees in a double row,
Spangled with lamplight, gold and cool;
And Winter trees are beautiful.

THE MEETING.

As I went up and he came down, my little six-year boy,
Upon the stairs we met and kissed, I and my tender Joy.
O fond and true, as lovers do, we kissed and clasped and
parted ;
And I went up and he went down, refreshed and happy-
hearted.

What need was there for any words, his face against my
face ?
And in the silence heart to heart spoke for a little space
Of tender things and thoughts on wings and secrets none
discovers ;
And I went up and he went down, a pair of happy lovers.

His clinging arms about my neck, what need was there
for words ?
O, little heart that beat so fast like any fluttering bird's !
"I love," his silence said ; "I love," my silence answered
duly ;
And I went up and he went down comforted wonderfully.

THE SENSES.

I thank Him for my eyes that see
The wondrous world He made for me ;
Such beauty spread on hill and lea,
That I might feast perpetually.

I thank Him for my ears that hear
The lark that heavenly traveller ;
All the blithe birds when spring is here,
And winds and waters shrill and clear.

I thank Him for the fragrance shed,
Airs of delight, on hill and mead ;
Woodruff, sweet-briar, and roses red,
And wild thyme 'neath the passing tread.

I thank Him for my palate fine,
Flavours in fruit and meat and wine
That bid my hunger sit and dine,
And praise the Giver most divine.

I thank Him for my feet that run,
Bear me abroad in wind and sun
By woods and fields and waters lone
That are His mercies every one.

I thank Him for my hands so feat.
"Now write!" He said; and they have writ,
That know the feel of roses sweet
And the child's cheek so exquisite.

The Lord of Love their Master is,
And all their diligence is His;
Who run to serve Him on their knees,
And do His bidding with great ease.

THE DESIRE.

Give me no mansions ivory white,
Nor palaces of pearl and gold ;
Give me a child for all delight
Just four years old.

Give me no wings of rosy shine,
Nor snowy raiment, fold on fold,
Give me a little boy all mine
Just four years old.

Give me no gold and starry crown,
Nor harps, nor palm-branches unrolled,
Give me a nestling head of brown
Just four years old.

Give me a cheek that's like the peach,
Two arms to clasp me from the cold ;
And all my heaven's within my reach
Just four years old.

Dear God, You give me from Your skies
A little Paradise to hold,
As Mary once her Paradise,
Just four years old.

THE COUNTRY LOVER.

I wake at morn to a great peace,
A most luxurious quietness,
That like a mother wraps me in,
Her breast and tender arms between.

The softest airs slip past and stir
The curtains sweet with lavender ;
No sound except the songs of birds,
The caw of rooks, the low of herds,

The watch-dog's bark, the bleat of sheep,
The country stirring in her sleep,
The drowsy hum of bees, the flow
Of quiet waters, soft and low.

Under a gable high I lie,
My window frames a patch of sky,
A stretch of bluest hill, a cloud,
Her white breast on the mountain bowed.

Where grass and trees one shadow make
The red-roofed cottages awake
And light their fragrant fires whose smoke
Hangs blue within the elm and oak.

Everything speaks of quiet sweet :
The children go on gentle feet,
And Blowsabella's laugh is soft
As coo of pigeons in the croft.

The cattle under spreading trees
Stand in rich pasture to their knees,
With quiet water, sweet and cool,
Under the mountain beautiful.

The Day, with finger to her lips,
Round to the heavenly Evening slips ;
And all the winds are lullabies,
And all the stars are mothers' eyes.

THE EXILE.

Since I have lost the mountains, I
Look for them in the waste of sky,
And think to see at the street-close
The lovely line of blue and rose
The mountains keep that once I knew.

There are no mountains there at all,
But only the blank roof and wall
Of many houses red and gray.
I had forgotten the old way
The mountains keep in rain and dew.

Even in the pleasant country places,
Where the fields' faces are friends' faces,
The mountains I shall not forget,
The mountains come between us yet,
Between me and the woods and streams.

The wind that blows across them calls
Ever at dawns and evenfalls,
And I am suddenly forlorn.
Across the pastures and ripe corn
I see the mountains in my dreams.

THE MOTHER.

Great passions I awake that must
Bow any woman to the dust
With fear lest she should fail to rise
As high as those enamoured eyes.

Now for these flying days and sweet
I sit in Beauty's Mercy-Seat.
My smiles, my favours I award,
Since I am beautiful, adored.

They praise my cheeks, my lips, my eyes,
With Love's most exquisite flatteries,
Covet my hands that they may kiss
And to their ardent bosoms press.

My foot upon the nursery stair
Makes them a music rich and rare;
My skirt that rustles as I come
For very rapture strikes them dumb.

What jealousies of word and glance!
The light of my poor countenance
Lights up their world that else were drear.
"But you are lovely, mother dear!"

I go not to my grave but I
Know Beauty's full supremacy :
Like Cleopatra's self, I prove
The very heights and depths of Love.

So to be loved, so to be wooed,
O, more than mortal woman should !
What if she fail or fall behind !
Lord, make me worthy, keep them blind !

SHEEP AND LAMBS.

Gray Spring day
And a gray sky,
Like flocks of sheep and lambs
The low clouds lie.

South wind, a shepherd,
Quietly masses
Tender flocks and herds
To the gray grasses.

Like a kind shepherd,
 To the gray hill
Drives his flocks and herds
 The way he will.

Sward gray as dew
 Sudden discloses
Glimpse of tender gold,
 Ashes of roses.

Through the mild country,
 Gray as a dove,
Clouds like sheep and lambs
 Quietly rove.

Low gleam the pastures
 Of the low sky ;
Like sheep and lambs at rest
 The gray clouds lie.

THE SICK CHILD.

He for whom the world was made
Cannot lift his heavy head,
All its pretty curls puffed out,
Burnt with fevers, parched with drought.

He, the tyrant, whimsical,
With the round world for his ball,
In a dreadful patience lies,
Old since yesterday and wise.

Like a martyr on the rack
Smiles, his soft lips burnt to black,
While the fever still devours
His small body, sweet as flowers.

Dreadful patience like a sword
Stabs his mother's heart, dear Lord :
Make him naughty, wild and gay,
As he was but yesterday !

Little services he pays
With his kisses and his praise,
While his eyes ask pardon still
That he's troublesome and ill.

He lies smiling with a fire
In his cheeks blown high and higher,
By the wind of fever fanned.
Lord, his kisses on my hand !

Give me back my boy, I pray,
Turbulent, of yesterday :
Not this angel, like a sword
In his mother's heart, dear Lord !

CHESTNUT.

Chestnut builds the loveliest house, the loveliest house
for lovers,
When May brings the swallow home and all the
feathered rovers,
Spreads the feast and makes the bed for finches, tits, and
plovers,
All in a glory of pale green amid the scented clovers.

Hark the lark, and hark the thrush, and see the skimming
swallow !
May's the priest in every bush, with honeymoons to
follow.
Hear the bridegroom shout "I will" o'er many a hill
and hollow,
While the brides lie coy and still in leafage deep or
shallow.

Cuckoo calls like John-a-Dreams, like John-a-Dreams
still roaming ;
Nightingales from dark to day awake the scented gloam-
ing ;
Orchards stand in rose and white amid the lilacs blooming ;
Brown is on the golden grass and the new hay is coming.

Chestnut lifts the loveliest roof of waving plume and feather ;

All within is emerald green and steeped in golden weather,
Dim and soft the little rooms of wool and moss and heather,
When love leads the lovers home and shuts them in together.

Hear, O hear, the blackbirds sing, the linnets and the thrushes !

All the dear delights of Spring in liquid thrills and gushes ;
All the dear delights of Love with pauses and with hushes,
Eden is in every tree, and Heaven in all the bushes.

Chestnut builds the loveliest house, for Love's delight and bedding ;

Silken soft the floor and walls and wild the roof-tree spreading ;

Lights the candles up for Love, a pearly lustre shedding.
Chestnut builds the loveliest house for wooing and for wedding.

THE CHILD'S GRAVE.

We let his grave return to grass.
Sweet grass in shine and showers,
Where the winds sing, the shadows pass,
Wraps that lost lamb of ours.

Oh, why should Earth so kind and mild
Be burdened with a stone,
Because our darling little child
Sleeps there alone, alone?

He has the fields, the daisies dear,
The larks that spurn the sod,
A little river sings a-near
The ancient house of God.

We left the silken grass to wave
Above his darling head,
And bade the Earth forget one grave
Of all her millions dead.

THE FIRST CUCKOO.

May had bid the young lambs play :

 The first Cuckoo

Called from distant fields and gray.

Half a dream, and half a bird :

 He said "Cuckoo,"

And what magic in the word !

'Twas new earth and a new heaven,

 Where the Cuckoo

"Cuckoo" called from dawn to even.

O, thou bird of dreams, there come

 With the Cuckoo

All lost summers winging home.

The lost days and the lost loves

 Come with Cuckoo,

In soft flight like many doves.

Home from winter and the night

 Fly with Cuckoo

The dead youth, the dead delight.

THE MOTHER'S HOUR.

My little son would fain
Go from his mother never ;
Leaves me with tender pain,
As parting were for ever.

I who have business,
The little cares of living,
Though small hands cling and press,
I send him from me grieving.

The little Love denied,
In passionate protestation
'Gainst her who shuts outside
His tender adoration.

Swift sands of gold that run
In Time's glass heaping, heaping,
Taking my little son
Out of his mother's keeping.

Time, there may come a time
He will not so approve me.
This is my golden clime,
In which the children love me.

Time, there may come a day,
Past prayers and interceding,
When he may turn away,
Deaf to my piteous pleading.

IN MAY.

I praise God that He chose the green
To wrap our dear brown mother in,
And not the purple or the rose
Nor other hue the rainbow shows.

To-day when chestnut fans half-spread
Feed the starved soul with daily bread,
When poplars like green tapers soar,
To say their Sursum Cordas o'er.

To-day with thorn-trees white as milk,
And fields all clad in grass-green silk,
Damasked with daisies wonderfully,
And every tree a heavenly tree.

What other colour, blue or white,
Could so refresh us, so delight?
Yellows or violets so brim o'er
Our cup of sweets to hold no more?

Year after year when May comes sweet,
Hidden in green from head to feet,
Under pale arches, dropping still
Lapfuls of flowers in vale and hill;

A wonder, a green miracle,
More fairy-fine than words can tell:
I praise God that He chose the green
To wrap our sweetheart-mother in.

THE CHILD AT PRAYER.

A Baby to a Baby prays.

Oh, Infant Jesus, meek and mild,
From 'mid the glory and the rays
Look on a little child.

As one child to another may,
He talks without a thought of fear,
Commending to a Child to-day
All that a child holds dear :—

His father, mother, brother, nurse,
His cat, his dog, his bird, his toys,
Things that make up the universe
Of darling girls and boys.

All sheep and horses, lambs and cows,
He counts them o'er, a motley crew,
And children in the neighbour's house,
And all the people too.

His friends, why all the world's his friend,
This four years darling, golden curled.
'Tis long before it has an end,
The bede-roll of his world.

A child lifts up his little hands
Unto a Child; and it may be
The Host of Heaven at gazing stands
That tender sight to see.

LULLABY.

The Twilight holds the children close
Against her dove-gray, shadowy breast,
Pillows the cheeks of peach and rose
While the last light dies in the west,
And sings the tenderest lullaby;
Her gray moths go on silver wings.
The children ope the sleepy eye
And listen to her while she sings.

Not yet, not yet are they asleep,
Though daisies close their golden eyes
And all the shadowy fields of sheep
Are hid in dew till morning rise.
Laid in her arms they watch a flight
Of stars about her forehead pale,
And while she fades in deeper night,
Play with her crescent and her veil.

IN SPRING.

The month that filled the dyke,
Bright or dark,
Rained on the fields alike
Many a lark.

Bold March of many weathers
Brings to bower
The singing folk in feathers,
Shower on shower.

April, in rain or sun,
Swallows come.
The cuckoo is not done
Dawn to gloam.

In May the nightingale
Sings his fill;
All night o'er hill and vale
Is not still.

Blackbird and thrush and linnet
Sing their best.
O Life, keep me this minute,
Take the rest !

SEA-HOLLY.

Grey thistle and grey sea-holly,
Tears in my heart and melancholy ;
Why am I here on this foreign shore,
Far away from your heart, asthore ?
I who thought to forget you wholly !

Grey thistle and grey sea-holly,
O young years, and their joy and folly !
Grey sands, grey as the hills ;
Holly grey as the mist that fills
Valleys grey in the evening holy.

Grey thistle and grey sea-holly,
Grey waters still breaking dully.
O grey meadows a world away,
Grey with dew in the mornings grey !
Sure 'tis I am forgetting slowly !

Grey thistle and grey sea-holly,
Dear, forgetting was only folly,
Grey hills that my heart will keep,
Fields of grey, in my last long sleep !
Grey thistle and grey sea-holly.

THE WIND FROM THE MOUNTAINS.

The wind from over the mountains
It blows and blows,
By lakes and rivers and fountains
Sweet as a rose.

The wind sings through the heather
That once I knew
When youth and I were together
The long year through.

'Twas I was light-foot and airy
That now am slow,
And brown as a sun-browned berry
That withered go.

O wind from over the mountains,
I hear in dreams
Your feet by rivers and fountains
And singing streams!

O wind from over the mountains,
If I might come
And lave my face in your fountains,
The streams of home,
And feel the breath of your blowing
So wild and strong,
My sorrow would all be going
And I be young!

THE BRIGHT LADY.

Down where the thorn-trees grow,
Ancient and wrinkled,
Snow in the valley low,
Mountains snow-sprinkled,
Stars in the purple sky,
Golden and ruddy;
There at the midnight I
Met the Bright Lady.

Pale as the moon was she,
Slight as a lily,
Eyes like the depth o' the sea,
Smiling so stilly.
Ochone, the night and cold!
Would I had tarried
By the head, curling gold,
Of her I married.

How her blue eyes ashine
Drooped at my glances!
How her heart beat on mine
In the gay dances.
Ochone, the night and rain!
Now I shall never
Clasp Bridget Bawn again,
Never, for ever!

There, in the shades apart
 Stood the Bright Lady,
Drew my soul, drew my heart,
 Smiling so steady ;
Led me all blind and dumb,
 Home to her palace.
Sweet were the lights of home
 In the green valleys !

Ochone, the snow and night !
 Love without measure ;
Harpers in gold and white
 Play for our pleasure.
I, the King, share her throne,
 She who enchants me ;
Ochone, the earth-winds moan
 And the earth haunts me !

NYMPHS.

Where are ye now, O beautiful girls of the mountain,
 Oreads all !
Nothing at all stirs here save the drip of the fountain ;
 Answers our call
Only the heart-glad thrush, in the Vale of Thrushes ;
 Stirs in the brake
But the dew-bright ears of the hare in his couch of rushes
 Listening, awake.

Flashes a while the fin of a trout in the waters
 Silver and cool.
Where are ye, flowers, maids of the woods, and the
 daughters
 Of river and pool ?
Clad in silver, wrought with roses and pansies,
 Many a leaf ;
Lovely your milk-white arms linked in the dances :
 Gone for our grief.

Delicate hands, soft touches out of the twilight,
 Lighter than wings;
Whispering voices heard in the dawn and the shy light;
 Something that clings
Like scented hair blown back on the lightest zephyr.
 Where are ye gone?
Dewy eyes like the eyes of a milk-white heifer,
 Vanished and flown.

THE WAKING.

In a dream last night,
 Dear, I thought you dead;
Wild with trouble and fright,
 Sobbed uncomforted.

O the desert way,
 Arid, without dew!
Darling, yesterday,
 I was vexed with you.

In a dream last night
What wild tears I wept !
O my heart's delight !
O my life bereft !

Darling, yesterday,
I was cold, unkind.
Dear, our mortal clay
Strikes ; its aim is blind.

Only yesterday,
You were hurt, distress.
Dear, our mortal clay
Strikes what it loves best.

When I woke at dawn,
You were breathing soft :
Dew on garden and lawn
And the lark aloft.

O a year of years
Lay I on my bed,
Wild with sobbing and tears,
Dreaming you were dead.

HIS WISDOM.

(Toby, six years old.)

His feet whene'er they walk abroad
By city ways must wend,
Who cares? he says, *since every road*
Is country in the end.

Lover of daisies and the grass,
Tree, bird and flower his friend;
The dreary houses cease to pass,
All's country in the end.

The walls shut out the sun, the air,
Mean sights depress, offend;
Yet every street's a traveller
For country in the end.

His thoughts through smoke and shadows dull
Like the lark's song ascend.
Somewhere, he says, 'tis beautiful;
All's country in the end.

Beyond the clouds, beyond the smoke
In a green space descend,
And meet with clear-eyed country-folk,
And country in the end.

Here moon and stars have dimmed their light,
Hard trouble's hard to mend;
Yet round some corner out of sight,
Lies country in the end.

Ho, traveller, take the stony road!
Up, hearts, though shoulders bend!
For even the hardest road, thank God,
Finds country in the end.

AUTUMN MORNING.

Outside my open window stands
A stretch of velvet common-lands,
A park with gold and scarlet trees,
And purple Autumn distances.

A singing brook with reed and sedge
And rushes to the water's edge;
A cygnet and a water-hen
That shun the noisy ways of men.

A dragon-fly upon the pool,
In green and azure beautiful;
And quiet pasturing beasts that stray,
And dogs and children at their play.

The red-roofed cottages demure,
Have china-asters to the door;
And phlox and stocks and holly-hocks,
And borders of sweet-scented box.

Beyond the trees, beyond the park,
The hill, gorse-gold and heather dark,
Rises; beyond the winding track
And the squire's twisted chimney-stack.

The morning smoke hangs in the bough,
From every cottage chimney now;
Sweet morning airs on hill and plain,
And all the world's new-made again.

The heavenly morning breathes and blows
Of heather and the opening rose;
So wild, so fresh, so pure and cool,
The Autumn morning's beautiful.

WHEN A LITTLE FARM I KEEP.

When a little farm I keep,
I shall tend my kine and sheep,
And my pretty lambs shall fold
In deep pastures starred with gold.

On green carpets they shall tread,
Gold and purple be their bed,
Honeyed clover make their food
In a watered solitude.

Garden places I shall tend.
For a welcome to a friend,
Make for him a roomy seat
By the box and privet sweet.

And my kitchen garden shall
Grow me fruits on tree and wall,
Give me blossoms in the spring
And an autumn gathering.

An old dial and a cote
Where the pigeons fly and float,
And a well so green and dim
Where the little fishes swim.

Hives of honey I shall own,
Bees with drowsy monotone
Toil all day to bring me home
Heather honey at the gloam.

'Twixt the mountains and the sea
There my little farm will be.
In a heart-remembered spot
I shall have my happy lot.

In the heart-remembered place,
Where the mountains lift their face,
I shall tend my sheep and kine,
And a thankful heart be mine.

When a little farm I keep
I shall sleep the happiest sleep,
To my simple meals invite
Thanksgiving and appetite.

In the heart-remembered place
I shall wear a shining face,
And my quiet nights be praise,
And a prayer my innocent days.

THE GHOST.

Since you I loved are lost
And all my hopes are vain,
Then come to me, a lonely ghost,
Out of the night and rain.

O come to me a ghost
And sit beside my fire,
I shall not fear you loved and lost
And still my heart's desire.

O come to me again
When stars are bright and keen,
O come and tap on the window-pane
And I will let you in.

Eagerly will I come
And set the window wide ;
And bid you welcome to your home
And to your own fireside.

O come, beloved ghost,
When stars lean on the hill :
And I will warm you from the frost
And from the night-wind chill.

You shall forget the grave,
And I forget to weep :
Since the old comfort we shall have
To lull us into sleep.

Fear! Is it fear of you,
And on my breast your head?
I shall but fear the dawning new,
And the cocks both white and red.

PASTORAL.

Under the mountains in the dews
The white and strawberry cattle stray ;
Only the bleat of lambs and ewes,
The bark of watch-dogs far away,
The songs of blackbird and of thrush
Break through the quiet evening hush.

The grass is deep about their feet,
The honeyed cowslips spring so tall :
Thank God, thank God, the hour is sweet,
This is their own hour after all :
Their little heaven of peace, a space
Betwixt the fair and slaughter-place.

Gone like a dreadful dream, the fair,
The shouts, the curses, and the goad,
The railway station's blare and flare,
The waggon with its trembling load
Packed in the darkness, sweating fear ;
Gone like a dream ; and they are here.

Night after night the stars above,
Day after day the rain, the sun,
And shade of elm and chestnut grove,
And streams that sparkle as they run,
And pools below the hanging trees,
Where they may stand and have great ease.

God knows 'tis good to rest and browse
Under the mountains and the sky,
Betwixt the fair and slaughter-house ;
In depths of peace their days go by.
Amid the dews, the songs, the scent,
Good is the hour of their content.

HOLIDAY.

On a green sward my place is set
Hard by a clump of mignonette,
Jessamine somewhere out of sight
Opes milky stars for my delight.

The lime with million bees a-hum
Drops honey from her honeycomb ;
Walls of pale honey, in whose shade
My pale, unhoneyed songs are made.

The musk carnation opens there
By mint and thyme and lavender ;
Scarlet and white the poppies stand,
A flight of moths from Fairyland.

There's sweet pea and clove gillyflower,
And reddest roses in a bower :
The South Wind on his vagrom wings
Spoils of my neighbour's garden brings.

With ripening apples 'gainst the blue,
The downy plum has purple too,
Odours of sun-warmed raspberries
Are honey and spice and ambergris.

The trees drop honey-dew for drought,
And spread their honeyed darkness out ;
Under the lime on a green sward
I sit and praise the garden's Lord.

TO THE BELOVED DEAD.

You Light of Laughter happiest,
In the old times what joy, what jest !
But now the times are sad and new,
And all our laughter gone with you.
The old times were ever the best.

You were as wild as the West Wind,
The West Wind that's wild and kind.
Nothing could bind you, nothing keep.
You are gone over the hills of sleep :
Be free, beloved, as the West Wind.

You gave with both hands over and over,
And every poor man was your lover.
Who ever turned from you unfed,
Heavy-hearted, uncomforted ?
May God repay you over and over !

O Light of Youth, 'tis well you go
Before the winter and the snow,
For who could think of you, a mourner,
An old man in the chimney corner,
Quiet and glad of rest? Ah, no!

You Light of Laughter, wild and giving,
Who could wish you sad length of living?
But all our laughter goes with you,
You and the Morning and the dew.
'Tis a sad world of care and grieving.

AN OLD SONG RE-SUNG.

I saw three ships a-sailing,
A-sailing on the sea,
The first her masts were silver,
Her hull was ivory.
The snows came drifting softly,
And lined her white as wool;
Oh, Jesus, Son of Mary,
Thy Cradle beautiful!

I saw three ships a-sailing,
The next was red as blood,
Her decks shone like a ruby,
Encrimsoned all her wood.
Her main-mast stood up lonely,
A lonely Cross and stark.
Oh, Jesus, Son of Mary,
Bring all men to that ark!

I saw three ships a-sailing.
The third for cargo bore
The souls of men redeemed,
That shall be slaves no more.
The lost beloved faces,
I saw them glad and free.
Oh, Jesus, Son of Mary,
When wilt Thou come for me?

THE VOICES.

I know now what I did not know,
The trouble in the wind and rain
That all night long sigh and complain.

All night in the lonely night
The Voices spake to one another,
Voice of the Rain and Wind her brother.

Ah ! what a world where youth must die !
Wind and Rain went crying and grieving ;
Half for the dead and half for the living.

When I was young I did not know
What the Wind cried in the rainy weather,
The Wind and the Rain crying together.

BLACKBIRD.

Day turns to night
And the Blackbird sings
In the gray twilight
A song of heavenly things.

He sings and he sways.
Is it joy or pain?
What is the word he says
That breaks the heart in twain?

What is his message clear
That stirs the fountains?
Thoughts of old days and dear
Rivers and mountains.

Oh, Blackbird asthore,
If I were in Heaven
I'd find an open door
Some sweet March even.

I would leave that bliss
To hear again
Your dear wild ecstacies
In a wet March lane.

Joy of immortal things,
Grief of mortality,
The Blackbird sways and sings
On a yet leafless tree.

The soul within its cage
Flutters in joy, in pain,
The Blackbird sings—oh, Mage!
In a wet March lane.

EAST WIND.

A black east wind and a sky unkind and the sun away,
But the lark above is singing of love in the old wild way,
And were you but here, O my only dear, would I ever mind
The dusty road and the frozen sod and the black east wind ?

There's scarce a blade for to hide love's bed and the brown
 bride coy,
Whose eyes will follow by hill and hollow her soaring joy.
O dear and true, if I clasped but you, should I fear, heart-
 warm,
The snow in the wind and the sky unkind and the mut-
 tering storm ?

The daffodil is out on the hill, and the lambs, a score,
Are listening, hark, to the bridegroom lark ; but he comes
 once more.
And would you return then I should not mourn in your
 fond embrace,
The sun away and the skies of grey and the snow in my
 face.

BLESSINGS.

God bless the little orchard brown
Where the sap stirs these quickening days.
Soon in a white and rosy gown
The trees will give great praise.

God bless the little rivers sweet
That chatter over golden sands;
When I was young they led my feet
Into enchanted lands.

God bless the little fields so green,
The fields that wore a friendly face,
And all the tender hills that lean
O'er the beloved place.

God bless the lark that sings and soars,
The nests the little builders make,
The chestnut and the sycamore
And many a twisted brake.

The hedges where the sweetbriar twined
With crab-apple and the whitethorn.
God knows I have them in my mind
Many a night and morn !

God knows I have it in my mind,
The white house with the golden eaves.
God knows since it is left behind
That something grieves and grieves.

God keep the small house in His care,
The garden bordered all in box,
Where primulas and wallflowers are
And crocuses in flocks.

God keep the little rooms that ope
One to another, swathed in green,
Where honeysuckle lifts her cup
With jessamine between.

God bless the quiet old grey head
That dreams beside the fire of me,
And makes home there for me indeed
Over the Irish Sea.

THE GREY STREETS OF LONDON.

The grey streets of London are greyer than the stone,
The grey streets of London where I must walk my lone,
The stony city pavements are hard to tread, alas !
My heart and feet are aching for the Irish grass.

For down the winding boreen the grass is like silk,
The wind is sweet as honey, the hedges white as milk.
Grey dust and greyer houses are here and skies like brass,
The lark is singing, soaring o'er the Irish grass.

The grey streets of London stretch out a thousand mile,
O dreary walls and windows, and never a song or smile !
Heavy with money-getting the sad grey people pass.
There's gold in drifts and shallows in the Irish grass.

God built the pleasant mountains and blest the fertile plain,
But in this sad grey London God knows I go in pain.
O brown as any amber, and clear as any glass,
The streams my heart hears calling from the Irish grass.

The grey streets of London they say are paved with gold;
I'd rather have the cowslips that two small hands could
hold.

I'd give the yellow money the foolish folk amass
For the dew that's grey as silver on the Irish grass.

I think that I'll be going before I die of grief,
The wind from over the mountains will give my heart
relief;
The cuckoo's calling sweetly, calling in dreams, alas !
Come home, come home, acushla, to the Irish grass.

THE WIDOW.

Between her tears that run like rain,
Streaking her roses with their stain,
Her pretty smiles break forth and play
In her drowned eyes the old sweet way,
And find a dimple near her lip.
From the old, dear companionship
Fond memories she recalls, gay jest,
And innocent laughter happiest.
Again she weeps, and for her part
Praises the Will that broke her heart,
And finds but Love for him and her,
Although the Will hath stripped her bare.

Already, o'er the waste of Death
She plants her flowers of Hope and Faith,
Heartsease with Love-lies-bleeding, sees
Her days so many rosaries
That must be told before they meet.
Yet seeing her feet run to his feet,
What matter if they travel fast
Or slow, so they arrive at last?
Again the smile breaks happily,
The Promise of God in a wet sky
Because Time goes; yea, Time and Space
That bring her nearer his embrace.

She hopes God will forgive her even
That her lost darling makes her heaven,
That as she strives upon her road
She thinks on him more than on God;
Nor blessed saint, nor seraphim
Allure her thoughts that are of him;
Nor that sweet Mother of all grief
Who gives the broken hearts relief.
Across that waste she sees him live;
Surely the kind God will forgive.
So her rod flowers like Aaron's Rod.
These be Thy tender mercies, God!

THE COUNTRY LIFE.

Mine be the country life, content
With the mild ways that shepherds went,
Who by a stream cut reeds and blew
The country's praises in the dew.

To drive my silly sheep to feed
On the sweet herbage of the mead
Through all the sunny hours and then
To fold them in to sleep again.

To know my flocks, to love my lambs,
All the sweet babies and their dams,
And see them leap to hear my call
From the sweet morn to evenfall.

Or by some pleasant river-side
To watch my kine stand dewy-eyed
Grateful to Him who brings to pass
The lilled water and sweet grass.

Or 'twixt the handles of a plough
Upon some purple upland's brow
To follow steaming steeds and see
God's beauty written on hill and lea.

This is the rustic's lot of bliss,
Which he of towns shall daily miss,
To see God's rainbow mercy bridge
The high heaven and the mountain ridge.

My shepherd dog upon my knee
His head shall rest for company
In hours of leisure, and shall keep
My wandering kine and straying sheep.

Shall taste my drink and share my bread,
Milk from the kine myself had fed ;
Oat-cake and butter, golden-dyed
As honey that my bees provide.

To market at the peep of day
My way shall wend with corn and hay ;
But sell no harmless, joyous life
To cry against the butcher's knife.

Be mine to foster life instead,
Bid life to leap on hill and mead,
His humble image, who once said
" Let there be Life ! " and Life was made.

Mine be the country way of peace,
To tend maternal earth's increase ;
The sun's child and the wind's, grown mild
With tender mercies for their child.

CHRISTMAS COMMUNION.

My heart a stable bare and hard,
Not sweet with balm and spikenard,
Was all I had to give Him when
His love bade Him be born again.
And yet His choice the stable is
Before the splendid palaces.

Beside the bed of starveling grass
Whereon He would be born, alas !
Are two great beasts that hang the head :
Ox of my appetite, my greed,
Ass of my folly, gross and dull ;
Be these Thy courtiers, Beautiful ?

Without, the Heaven a glory shows,
Angels on Angels, rows on rows ;
And stars on stars, all shine on shine ;
And Kings fain to be serfs of Thine.
Thou hast such adoration. Nay,
Here wilt Thou come ? Here wilt thou stay ?

Bid me with ox and ass to lie
Face downward in humility,
And in a little truce of Heaven
Know we are ransomed and forgiven.
Bid us to weep, bid us to burn,
From sin and ignorance to turn.

GOLDEN HOUR.

This is the one enchanted minute,
All the year's golden meaning in it;
Her full fruition and her flower
Rained like a golden Danaë shower.

The hours run golden in the glass,
The hours shake gold-dust on the grass,
Where meadows late were brown and gray,
This is the kingcup's holiday.

The fortunate road runs white, unrolled
'Twixt ribbons of the purest gold.
Traveller for Eldorado, ho!
This is the way that you must go.

Laburnum swings her golden chain;
Gold honeysucks by porch and pane
Will hoard their sweetest sweets until
The gold moon climbs the golden hill.

Hear the enamoured nightingale
Call over golden fields dew-pale:
In the enchanted dusk—oh, hear it!
But is it bird, or is it spirit?

The wind ruffles the golden trees.
And makes his golden melodies;
The dawn was golden, and the close
Of evening made a golden rose.

It is the one enchanted hour,
When the year breaks to golden flower.
The sands run in the glass—to-morrow,
To-morrow looms a golden sorrow.

THE MOUNTAINS.

I wish I could get the peace of the mountains into me,
The mountains of God that are ever calm, full of rest;
Be quiet, they say, and lift their faces to Heaven.
The lark with his wings as he rises brushes their crest;
Theirs are the roses of dawn, the glories of even;
The quiet of night folds their heads to her breast.
I wish I could get the peace of the mountains into me,
And not to have all the world a trouble to me.

I am full of frets and fatigues, of angers and fears.
I wish the mountains would teach me their secret of peace.
They have seen men born and die and the work of their
hands

Pass like the leaves of autumn ; increase and decrease
Of this world's glory ; the years like a glassful of sands
Run out and be finished, the centuries wither and cease.
They have looked to God through all the days and the
years.

I wish I was still like the mountains, not vexed, full of
fears.

Everything passes—the mountains whisper to me.
There is nothing that matters, they say, but God and the
Soul.

They have cowls of the mists and rain for their habits gray ;
And this world's glory has only death for its goal.
Be still, there is only God and the Soul they say,
Everything passes save only God and the Soul.
I wish I could get the peace of the mountains into me,
And not to have all the world a trouble to me.

THE DOVES.

The house where I was born,
Where I was young and gay,
Grows old amid its corn,
Amid its scented hay.

Moan of the cushat dove,
In silence rich and deep;
The old head I love
Nods to its quiet sleep.

Where once were nine and ten
Now two keep house together;
The doves moan and complain
All day in the still weather.

What wind, bitter and great,
Has swept the country's face,
Altered, made desolate
The heart-remembered place?

What wind, bitter and wild,
Has swept the towering trees
Beneath whose shade a child
Long since gathered heartsease?

Under the golden eaves
The house is still and sad,
As though it grieves and grieves
For many a lass and lad.

The cushat doves complain
All day in the still weather;
Where once were nine or ten
But two keep house together.

THE CALL.

The unforgotten voices call at twilight,
In the grey dawning, in the quiet night hours;
Voices of mountains and of waters falling,
Voices of wood-doves in the tender valleys,
Voices of flowery meadows, golden cornfields:
Yea, all the lonely bog-lands have their voices.

Voices of church-bells over the green country,
Memories of home, of youth. O unforgotten!
When all the world's asleep the voices call me,
Come home, acusbla, home! Why did you leave us?
The little voices hurt my heart to weeping,
There are small fingers plucking at my heart-strings.

Let me alone, be still, I will not hear you.
Why would I come to find the old places lonely?
They are all gone, the loving, the true-hearted;
Beautiful country of the dead, I come not:
Why would I meet the cold eyes of the stranger?
All the nests of my heart are cold and empty.

I will not come for all your soft compelling,
Little fingers plucking me by the heart-strings,
In the gray dawning, in the quiet night-hours.
Because the dead, the darling dead return not
And all the nests of my heart are cold and lonely.
They will not give me peace at dawn and twilight.

EIGHTY YEARS OLD.

The world is left behind him quite,
His soul hath journeyed many a mile
Already on her heavenly flight;
Though here he tarries yet awhile.

The tired old body's with us yet :
The spirit has gone free and pressed
Beyond life's long fatigue and fret
To where is quietness and rest.

He looks at us and sees us not,
Or sees us dimly : his tired eyes,
Innocent, without fleck or spot,
Wear the child's colour and the sky's.

He has regained his innocence,
Is newly-washed and white and sweet,
Clean from the stains of sin and sense,
Like a dear child from head to feet.

Only his heart's love answers ours,
The old heart tarries with us still,
Puts out green shoots of love, fresh flowers,
That age nor Death himself can kill.

A child, a child in the dark awhile
Whom the dark frightens till he turns
Glad to his mother-daughter's smile
And her kind heart for which he yearns.

Across what infinite distances
He looks at us? across what sea?
Only our hearts have touch with his,
Else we had lost him utterly.

TO THE MOTHER.

I heard them talking and praising the grey French country,
Dotted with red roofs high and steep,
With just one grey stone church-tower keeping sentry
Over the quiet dead asleep.
Grey skies and greyer dunes, as grey as duty,
Grey sands where grey gulls flew.
And I said in my passionate heart, they know not beauty,
Beloved, who know not you.

I heard them praise the gold of the stormy sunset
And the pale moon's path on the sea ;
I thought of your clouds with their wild magnificent onset,
Your eagles screaming free.
I thought of your mild kind mountains, angel-bosomed,
Quiet in dusk and dew.
What flower of beauty that ever in Paradise blossomed,
Love, was denied to you ?

I thought of the pale green dawns, and gold day's closes.
Dear, I shall not forget
Nights when your skies were full of the flying roses,
Millions and millions yet.
All your still lakes and your rivers broad and gracious,
Dear mountain glens I knew ;
When the trump of judgment sounds and the world's in
ashes
I shall remember you.

Remember ! foretaste of Heaven you are, O Mother !
By bog-lands, brown and bare,
Where every little pool is the blue sky's brother,
Your wild larks spring in the air.
Land of my heart ! smiling I heard their praises,
Smiling and sighing too.
I would give this grey French land for a handful of daisies
Plucked from the breast of you.

THE EPITAPH.

Write on my grave when I am dead,
 Whatever road I trod
That I admired and honourèd
 The wondrous works of God.

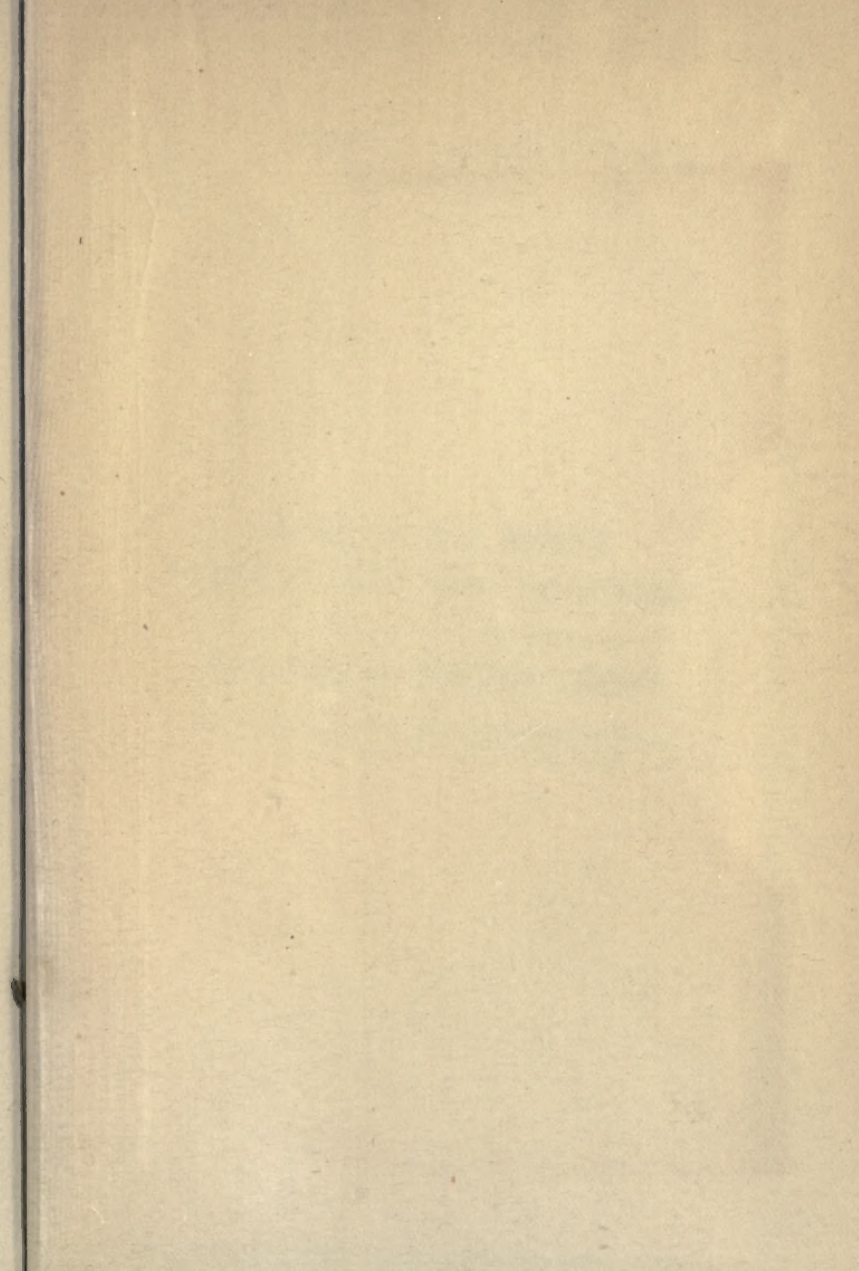
That all the days and years I had,
 The greatest and the least,
Each day with grateful heart and glad
 I sat me to a feast.

That not alone for body's meat
 Which takes the lowest place
I gave Him grace when I did eat
 And with a shining face.

But for the spirit filled and fed
 That else must waste and die,
With sun and stars replenishèd
 And dew and evening sky.

The beauty of the hills and seas
 Brimmed that immortal cup;
And when I went by fields and trees
 My heart was lifted up.

Lap me in the green grass and write
Upon the daisied sod
That still I praised with all my might
The wondrous works of God.





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